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THE FURTHER DETERMINATION OF  
THE ABSOLUTE.

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"To love unsatisfied the world is mystery,  
A mystery which love satisfied seems to comprehend."

F. H. BRADLEY.

*Appearance and Reality*, p. xv.

## PREFACE.

It would be difficult for any one to be more conscious than I am of the extreme crudeness of this paper, and of its absolute inadequacy to its subject. My excuse must be that I knew the conclusions at which it arrived were held by scholars whose right to pronounce on such points was different indeed to my own. It seemed that, if my arguments could not justify my conclusions, my conclusions might excuse my arguments. And I hoped that an attempt to explain my position to a few of my teachers and fellow-students might produce criticisms or refutations which should be profitable either in improving or preventing any further work on my part.

I fear that, in my uncertainty as to whether I meant to write for people who were interested in my reasoning or people who sympathised with my conclusions, I have failed in both attempts, and that I have been at once too technical and too personal. It is not easy, in the borderlands of metaphysics, to avoid both these errors at once, and I can only hope that between the two something may be found which some one may care to read.

If any one thinks I have been talking about things which should not be spoken, or at any rate be written about, it may interest him to know that I am very much inclined to agree with him.

The progress of an idealistic philosophy may, from some points of view, be divided into three stages. The problem of the first is to prove that reality is not exclusively matter. The problem of the second is to prove that reality is exclusively spirit. The problem of the third is to determine what is the fundamental nature of spirit.

The importance of the second of these stages is very great. The universe stands transfigured before our eyes. We have gained a solution of our difficulties—still abstract, indeed, but all-extensive. Because the fundamental nature of ourselves and of the universe is the same, we are enabled to say that the universe and ourselves are implicitly in harmony—a harmony which must some day become explicit. The world can present no problem which we cannot some day solve; it is therefore rational. And our nature can make no demand, can set no aim before itself which will not be seen some day to be realised in the world, which is therefore righteous. The harmony in question holds good, no doubt, not of the irrational and unrighteous self of the present, but of the rational and righteous self of the future. But we know that whatever turns out to be the fundamental fact of our nature will have complete realization and satisfaction, and this fundamental fact of our nature is not only superior to all other aspects of us, but is the only reality, of which they are merely phases and misconceptions. And we know, therefore, that not a thought, not a desire, can affect us, however apparently false and trivial, which will not be found to be realised in its truth by the ultimate reality of things. All that we know, all that we want, must be found in that reality, and will not be found the less, because much more than we can at present perceive or desire will be found there too.

But this result, though comprehensive, is still abstract, and is therefore defective even from a theoretical point of view. It does not enable us to see the ultimate nature of the universe, and to perceive that it is rational and righteous.



We only know in an abstract way that it *must* be rational and righteous, because it fulfils the formal condition of rationality and righteousness—harmony between the nature of the universal and the nature of the individual. Such a skeleton is clearly by no means complete knowledge. And it is therefore, to some extent, incorrect and inadequate knowledge; for it is knowledge of an abstraction only, while the truth, as always, is concrete. The content of the universe has not been produced by, or in accordance with, a self-subsistent law. It is the individual content of the universe which is concrete and self-subsistent, and the law is an abstraction of one side of it, with which we cannot be contented. From a theoretical point of view, then, the assertion of the supremacy of spirit is comparatively empty unless we can determine the fundamental nature of spirit.

The practical importance of this determination is not less. As a guide to life, the knowledge of the absolutely desirable end is, no doubt, not without drawbacks. Christ's remark "Be ye perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect" reveals a fundamentally wrong principle. A certain degree of virtue, as of knowledge and happiness, is appropriate and possible for every stage of the process of spirit. By the aid of reflection we may perceive the existence of a stage much higher than that in which we are. But the knowledge that we shall some day reach it is not equivalent to the power of reaching it at once. We are entitled to as much perfection as we are fit for, and it is useless to demand more. An attempt to live up to the Summum Bonum, without regard to present circumstances, will be not only useless, but, in all probability, actually injurious. The true course of our development at present is mostly by thesis and antithesis, and an attempt to become virtuous as the crow flies will only lead us into some *cul de sac* from which we shall have to retrace our steps.

Nevertheless, the knowledge of the goal to which we are going may occasionally, if used with discretion, be a help in directing our course. It will be something if we can find out what parts of our experience are valid *per se*, and can be pursued for their own sake, and what are merely subsidiary. For however long it may take us to



reach the Absolute, it is sometimes curiously near us in isolated episodes of life, and our attitude towards certain phases of consciousness, if not our positive actions, may be materially affected by the consideration of the greater or less adequacy with which those phases embody reality.

In close connection with the attitude which we take up towards any experience is the emotional-significance which it bears for us. And the success of a more complete determination of the nature of spirit would not be unimportant with regard to its effect on our happiness. The position from which we start has indeed already attained to what may be called the religious standpoint. It assures us of an ultimate solution which shall only differ from our present highest ideals and aspirations by far surpassing them. From a negative point of view, this is complete, and it is far from unsatisfactory as a positive theory. But it is clear that, if so much knowledge is consoling and inspiring, more knowledge would be better. It is good to know that reality is better than our expectations. It would be still better to be able at once to expect the full good that is coming. If the truth is so good, our hopes must become more desirable in proportion as they become more defined.

And, if we descend to more particular considerations, we shall find that in other ways more complete knowledge might conduce to our greater happiness. For there are parts of our lives which, even as we live them, seem incomplete and merely transitory, as having no value unless they lead on to something better. And there are parts of our lives which seem so fundamental, so absolutely desirable in themselves, that we could not anticipate without pain their absorption into some higher perfection, as yet unknown to us, and demand that they shall undergo no further change, except an increase in purity and intensity. Now we might be able to show of the first of these groups of experiences that they are, in fact, mere passing phases, with meaning only in so far as they lead up to and are absorbed in something higher. And we might even be able to show of the second that they are actually fundamental, lacking so far in breadth and depth, but in their explicit nature already revealing the explicit reality. If we can do

this, and can justify the vague longings for change on the one hand, and for permanence on the other, which have so much effect on our lives, the gain to happiness which will result will not be inconsiderable.

Let us now endeavour to consider what data we have for our enquiry. Hegel (*Encyclopaedia*. Section 236) defines the Absolute Idea, which is the content of Spirit, as "der Begriff der Idee, dem die Idee als solche der Gegenstand, dem das Objekt sie ist." If we translate this into terms more applicable to our present purpose, we shall find, I think, that it means that Spirit is ultimately made up of various finite individuals, each of which finds his character and individuality by relating himself to the rest, and by perceiving that they are of the same nature as himself. In this way the Idea in each individual has as its object the Idea in other individuals.

To justify this conception of the nature of Spirit would be a task beyond the limits of this paper. Indeed it could only be done by going over the whole course of Hegel's Logic. But it may not be impossible to indicate briefly some reasons why it should recommend itself to us.

In the first place it is quite clear that Spirit cannot be an undifferentiated unity. It must have some character, or it would be reduced to the state of mere Being, which is the same as Nothing. And character implies relations. Now ultimate reality cannot, of course, have any relations with things external to itself, since no such things exist. Ultimate reality must, therefore, be taken as a whole which is differentiated into an organism of parts, which by their relations to one another constitute its character.

And these parts again must, each for itself, partake of the essential nature of Spirit. For although Spirit is only realised in them in so far as they are united, it is nevertheless realised in each part, and not merely in the union. That the Idea has itself as a "Gegenstand" and an "Objekt" indicates that the Idea is manifested in numerically distinguishable centres. Besides this, we have seen that reality must be regarded as differentiated, and if the Idea is not present in each differentiated part, then the relative independence of the parts must be considered as something

alien to the Idea. And if anything did remain alien to it, the Idea could not yet be called Absolute. Each part of Spirit must therefore itself be spirit, and expresses (at present, of course, only implicitly) its full nature. And Spirit is thus made up of spirits—to use a common expression—each a part of the whole, but each at the same time a perfect individual, because it expresses the whole nature of Spirit. In other words the Absolute realises itself in a community of individuals like ourselves—in what has been termed the *Civitas Dei*.

We may arrive at this conclusion from another point of view, if we consider that the course of development is always from a whole which has no differentiated parts, and therefore no real unity, to one which is a real unity of differentiated parts. Here again, for a detailed proof, a reference to Hegel would be necessary, but the fact is one which can be easily observed. The lowest abstractions in Nature are Space and Time, the parts of which are, in themselves, absolutely indistinguishable, and have not the slightest independent existence. And unity is as much lacking to Space and Time as individuality. Any part of either can be separated from any whole of which it may be a part without the slightest alteration in its nature. We find here at once infinite divisibility, and an entire absence of objective divisions. Advancing to the subject matter of physics we find that parts have now slightly differentiated themselves from one another, and, at the same time that the wholes have gained some slight degree of unity. In chemistry both the individuality of the parts and the coherence of the wholes have again increased. And in any case which falls under the category of organic life we find that the parts lose all meaning on being separated from the whole, just because they are so highly differentiated into a scheme which finds its unity in that whole. When we arrive at the Absolute, the unity has become perfect, and so must the differentiation. That which is most completely differentiated is the individual, and we again reach the conclusion that the absolute must consist of individuals bound together by a unity closer than any which we know at present, who are, for that very

reason, more completely individuals than we can at present imagine.

Or once more. It is certain that finite spirits exist at present. If they ceased to exist as such in the Absolute, they must either have gone out altogether, or be merged in something else. The first alternative is scarcely possible, since Spirit is the fundamental reality of the universe, for it is difficult to see what cause could be contained in the universe which would be adequate to the destruction of even a part of absolute reality. The only destruction we know is that of forms and combinations, and we have no reason to believe, I doubt if we can even conceive, that the content of a form is ever destroyed. Moreover, if spirit could cease to be, its existence would be in time. It is, however, a consequence of an idealism based on the Dialectic, that time is not an adequate expression of ultimate reality, and if spirit is ultimate reality it cannot be conceived as merely in time.

The suggestion, on the other hand, that finite spirits may possibly be merged in the infinite without actual destruction, involves a fallacy. It implies that in Spirit, as in the material world, there is a substance or matter which is indifferent to the form it takes, and which can go from one form to another.

Without tracking this error to its roots it must suffice us to observe here that such a view inevitably involves the application of the conception of quantity to Spirit. The Absolute must be considered as in some way affected by the absorption of the finite spirits into itself. If it were not there could be no valid distinction between absorption and the absolute destruction already considered. And, *ex hypothesi*, it is not affected by their form, for the form is supposed to disappear. Either the form is conceived as destroyed altogether, or as passing into the higher form characteristic of the Absolute. In either case the form of the Absolute is left unaffected.

We can only conceive it then as affected by the magnitude of the finite spirits which it absorbs. But to speak of an individual as containing a certain quantity of Spirit, as a bottle does of whiskey, is a glaring misapplication of



a quite inadequate category. We are thus forced to the conclusion that finite spirits can no more be merged than they can be annihilated, that, since they unquestionably exist at present, they must be taken as existing in the Absolute.

I have endeavoured to summarily recapitulate the grounds which make it probable that the Absolute is composed of individuals closely connected with one another, although all actual proof must depend on a detailed study of the dialectic. We must now enquire in what manner these individuals will be able to express, at once and completely, their own individuality and the unity of the Absolute.

Human consciousness presents three aspects. On the one hand we have knowledge. Here we endeavour to effect our unity with that which is outside us, by constructing in our own minds a faithful representation of the outside reality. On the other hand in volition we postulate something as demanded by our own nature, and endeavour to produce a harmony between ourselves and our environment by discovering or producing an agreement between our demands and the facts. Besides these, there is feeling. In so far as we perceive ourselves to be out of harmony with our surroundings, we feel pain, in so far as we feel ourselves in harmony with them, we feel pleasure. Feeling accompanies every mental state. Even if pleasure and pain be exactly balanced, there is an equilibrium, but not an absence of feeling.

We may observe that knowledge and volition are correlative methods of endeavouring to obtain that unity between individuals which is the perfection of spirit, while feeling is not so much a struggle towards the goal as the result of the process, so far as it has gone. Through knowledge and volition we gain harmony, and, according as we have gained it more or less completely, our feeling is pleasurable or painful. The absence of any independent movement of feeling renders it unnecessary, for the present, to consider it separately.

I shall first enquire what general aspect would be presented by spirit, if we suppose knowledge and volition to have become as perfect as possible. It will then be

necessary to ask whether knowledge and volition are permanent and ultimate forms of the activity of spirit. I shall endeavour to show that they are not, that they both postulate, to redeem them from paradox and impossibility, an ideal which they can never reach, and that their real truth and meaning is found only when they imply and lead on to a state of the mind in which they themselves, together with feeling, are swallowed up and transcended in a more concrete unity. I believe that this unity will be found to be essentially the same as that mental state which, in the answer to our first question, we shall find to be the practically interesting aspect of knowledge and volition in their highest perfection as such. This state will thus have been shown to be, not only the result which the process of the universe tends to produce as its final outcome, but also to be the only truth and reality of spirit, of which all other spiritual activities are only distortions and abstractions, and into which they are all absorbed. It will not only be the highest truth, but the only truth. We shall have found in it the complete determination of Spirit, and therefore of reality.

Let us turn to the first of these questions, and consider what would be the result in our attitude towards the universe, when both knowledge and volition had reached perfection. To answer this we must first determine in rather more detail what would be the nature of perfect knowledge and volition.

In the first place we must eliminate knowledge as the occupation of the student. The activity and the pleasure which lie in the search after knowledge can form no part of the Absolute. For all such activity implies that some knowledge has not yet been gained, and that the ideal, therefore, has not yet been reached. The ideal must be one, not of learning, but of knowing.

And the knowledge itself must be enormously changed in its nature. At present much of our knowledge directly relates to matter; all of it is conditioned and meditated by matter. But if the only absolute reality is Spirit, then, when knowledge is perfect, we must see nothing but Spirit everywhere. We must have seen through matter till it



disappears. How far this could be done merely by greater knowledge on our parts, and how far it would be necessary for the objects themselves, which we at present conceive as matter, to first develop explicitly qualities now merely implicit, is another question, but it is clear that it would have to be done, one way or another, before knowledge could be said to be perfect.

Nor is this all. Not only must all matter, but all contingency, be eliminated. At present we conceive of various spirits,—and even of Spirit in general—as having qualities for which we can no more find a rational explanation than we can for the primary qualities of matter, or for its original distribution in space. But this must disappear in perfected knowledge. For knowledge demands an explanation of everything, and if, at the last, we have to base our explanation on something left unexplained, we leave our system incomplete and defective.

Since knowledge essentially consists of argument from data, it would seem that such perfection could never be attained, since each argument which explained anything must rest upon an unexplained foundation, and so on *ad infinitum*. And it is true that we can never reach a point where the question “Why?” can no longer be asked. But we can reach a point where it becomes unmeaning, and at this point knowledge reaches the highest perfection of which, as knowledge, it is susceptible.

The ideal which we should then have reached would be one in which we realised the entire universe as an assembly of spirits, and recognised that the qualities and characteristics which gave to each of these spirits its individuality, did not lie in any contingent or non-rational peculiarity in the individual himself, but were simply determined by his relations to all other individuals. These relations between individuals, again, we should not conceive as contingent or accidental, so that the persons connected formed a mere miscellaneous crowd. We should rather conceive them as united by a pattern or design, resembling that of a picture or of a living organism, so that every part of it was determined by every other part, in such a manner that from any one all the others could, with

sufficient insight, be deduced, and that no change could be made in any without affecting all. This complete inner-dependence is only approximately realised in the unity which is found in aesthetic or organic wholes, but in the Absolute the realisation would be perfect. As the whole nature of every spirit would consist exclusively in the expression of the relations of the Absolute, while those relations would form an organic whole, in which each part, and the whole itself, would be determined by each part, it follows that any fact in the universe could be deduced from any other fact, or from the nature of the universe as a whole.

If knowledge reached this point, the only question which could remain unanswered would be the question, "Why is the universe as a whole what it is, and not something else?" And this question could not be answered. We must not, however, conclude from this the existence of any want of rationality in the universe, for the truth is that the question ought never to have been asked. For it is the application of a category, which has only meaning within the universe, to the universe as a whole. Of any part we are entitled and bound to ask "why," for, by the very fact that it is a part, it cannot be self-subsistent, and must depend on other things. But when we come to an all-embracing totality, then, with the possibility of finding a cause, there disappears also the necessity of finding one. Self-subsistence is not in itself a contradictory or impossible idea. It *is* contradictory if applied to anything in the universe, for whatever is in the universe must be in connection with other things. But this can of course be no reason for suspecting a fallacy when we find ourselves obliged to use the idea of that which has nothing outside it with which it could stand in connection.

To put the matter in another light, we must consider that the necessity of finding causes and reasons for phenomena depends on the necessity of showing why they have assumed the particular form which actually exists. The inquiry is thus due to the possibility of things happening otherwise than they did, which possibility, to gain certain knowledge, must be excluded by assigning definite causes

for one event rather than the others. Now we can imagine the possibility of any one thing in the universe being different from what it actually is. But there is no meaning in the supposition that the whole universe could be different from what it is. On this subject we may refer to Mr. F. H. Bradley, who has demonstrated (Logic, Book I., Chap. VII.) that a possibility is meaningless unless it has some element in common with what actually exists. If, however, the actual universe was shown to be a completely interdependent organism, then nothing could be different from it in part without being entirely different from it, for the existence of one feature of such an organism would involve all the rest. And the possibility that the universe might have been entirely different from what it now is, would leave no feature common to it with actual existence, and would be therefore unmeaning. If the possibility of variation is unmeaning, there can be no need to assign a determining cause.

We can thus reject any fear that the necessity which exists for all knowledge to rest at last on the immediate shows any imperfection which might prove a permanent bar to the development of Spirit. For we have seen that the impulse which causes us even here to demand fresh mediation is unjustified and even meaningless. But we shall have to consider in the second part of this essay whether the possibility of even making the unjustified demand does not indicate that for complete harmony we must go on to something which embraces and transcends knowledge.

Let us now pass on to the ideal of volition. We can in the first place exclude, as incompatible with such an ideal, all volition which leads to action. For action involves that you have not something which you want, or that you will be deprived of it if you do not fight for it, and both these ideas are fatal to the fundamental and complete harmony between desire and environment which is necessary to the perfect development of Spirit.

Nor can virtue have a place in our ideal, even in the form of aspiration, whatever Mr. Green may say to the contrary. Like all other vices, however dear, it will have

to be left outside the door of heaven. For virtue implies a choice, and choice implies either uncertainty or conflict. In the completed ideal neither of these could exist. We should desire our truest and deepest well-being with absolute necessity, since there would be nothing to deceive and tempt us away. And we should find the whole universe conspiring with us to help us onward. Under these circumstances there would be no more virtue in obeying the law, for example, of courage, than in obeying the law of gravitation. The use of the word law in both cases would no longer be misleading, for all difference between precepts and truths would have ceased, when the righteous was *ipso facto* the real.

The ideal of volition is rather the experience of perfect harmony between ourselves and our environment which excludes alike action and choice. This involves, in the first place, that we should have come to a clear idea as to what the fundamental demands and aspirations of our nature are. Till we have done this we cannot expect harmony. All other desires will be in themselves inharmonious, for, driven on by the inevitable dialectic, they will show themselves imperfect, transitory, or defective, when experienced for a sufficiently long time, or in a sufficiently intense degree. And, besides this, the very fact that the universe is fundamentally of the nature of Spirit, and therefore *must* be in harmony with us when we have fully realised our own natures, proves that it *cannot* be in the long run in harmony with us so long as our natures remain imperfect. For such a harmony with the imperfect would be an imperfection, out of which it would be forced by its own dialectic.

And this harmony must extend through the entire universe. If everything (or rather everybody) in the universe is not in harmony with us our ends cannot be completely realised. For the whole universe is connected together, and every part of it must have an effect, however infinitesimal, upon every other part. Our demands must be reconciled with and realised by every other individual.

And again we cannot completely attain our own ends unless everyone else has attained his own also. For, as



was mentioned in the last paragraph, we cannot attain our own ends except by becoming in perfect harmony with the entire universe. And this we can only do in so far as both we and it have become completely rational. It follows that for the attainment of our ends it would be necessary for the entire universe to have explicitly developed the rationality which is its fundamental nature. And by this self-development every other individual, as well as ourselves, would have attained to the perfection of volition. Moreover, looking at the matter from a less formal point of view, we may observe that some degree of sympathy seems inherent to our nature, so that our pleasure in some one else's pain, though often intense, is never quite unmixed. And on this ground also our complete satisfaction must involve that of all other people.

We have now determined, as well as we can the nature of perfected knowledge and volition, as far as the formal conditions of perfection will allow us to go. What is the concrete and material content of such a life as this? What does it come to? I believe it means one thing, and one thing only—love. When I have explained that I do not mean benevolence, even in its most impassioned form, not even the feeling of St. Francis, I shall have cut off the one probable explanation of my meaning. When I add that I do not mean the love of Truth, or Virtue, or Beauty, or any other word that can be found in the dictionary, I shall have made confusion worse confounded. When I continue by saying that I mean passionate, all-absorbing, all-consuming love, I shall have become scandalous. And when I wind up by saying that I do not mean sexual desire, I shall be condemned as hopelessly morbid—the sin against the Holy Ghost of Ascalon.

For let us consider. We should find ourselves in a world composed of nothing but individuals like ourselves. With these individuals we should have been brought into the closest of all relations, we should see them, each of them, to be rational and righteous. And we should know that in and through these individuals our own highest aims and ends were realised. What else does it come to? To know another person thoroughly, to know that he conforms

to one's highest standards, to feel that through him the end of one's own life is realised—is this anything but love?

Such a result would come all the same, I think, if one only looked at the matter from the point of view of satisfied knowledge, leaving volition out of account. If all reality is such as would appear entirely reasonable to us if we knew it completely, if it is all of the nature of spirit, so that we, who are also of that nature, should always find harmony in it, then to completely know a person and to be known by him must, as I conceive, end in this way. No doubt knowledge does not always have that result in every-day life. But that is incomplete knowledge, under lower categories and subject to unremoved contingencies, which, from its incompleteness, must leave the mind unsatisfied. Perfect knowledge would be different. "Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner"—even the world knows that. Philosophy might go a step further. How much more if besides the satisfaction attendant on mere knowledge, we had realised that it was through the people round us that the longings and desires of our whole nature were being fulfilled.

This would, as it seems to me, be the only meaning and significance of perfected Spirit. Knowledge and volition would still remain, but their importance would consist exclusively in their producing this result. For it is only in respect of the element of feeling in it that any state can be deemed to have intrinsic value. This is of course not the same thing as saying that we always act for our own greatest happiness, or even that our own greatest happiness is our only rational end. We do not deny the possibility of disinterested care for the welfare of others. We only assert that the welfare of any person depends upon the feeling which is an element of his consciousness. Nor do we necessarily assert that a quantitative maximum of pleasure is the *Summum Bonum*. It is possible that there may be qualitative differences of pleasure, which might make a comparatively unhappy state more truly desirable than one of far greater happiness. But this does not interfere with the fact that it is only with regard to its element of feeling that any state can be held to be intrinsically desirable.

Now perfected knowledge and volition, taken in con-



nection with the consequent feeling, not only produce personal love, but, as it seems to me, produce nothing else. There are, it is true, many other ways in which knowledge and volition produce pleasure. There are the pleasures of learning, and of the contemplation of scientific truth; there are the pleasures of action, of virtue, and of gratified desire. But these all depend on the imperfect stages of development in which knowledge and volition are occupied with comparatively abstract generalities. Now all general laws are abstractions from, and therefore distortions of the concrete reality, which is the abstract realised in the particular. When we fail to see the abstract in the particular, then, no doubt, the abstract has a value of its own—is as high or higher than the mere particular. But when we see the real individual, in whom the abstract and particular are joined, we lose all interest in the abstract as such. Why should we put up with an inadequate falsehood, when we can get the adequate truth? And feeling towards an individual, fully known as such, has only the one form.

It may be objected that I am making the whole thing too cut and dried. What right have we to talk of love coming as a necessary consequence of anything? Is not it the most unreasoning thing in life, choosing for itself, often in direct opposition to what would seem the most natural plan? I should explain the contradiction as follows—an explanation which I am scarcely prepared to defend, but only to suggest. Nothing but perfection could really deserve love. Hence, when it comes in this imperfect world, it only comes in cases in which the affection is able to disregard the other as he now is—that is, as he really is not—and to care for him as he really is—that is, as he will be. Of course this is only the philosopher's explanation of the matter. To the unphilosophic subject of the explanation it simply takes the form of a wild conviction that the other person, with all his faults, is somehow *in himself* infinitely good—at any rate, infinitely good for his friend. The circumstances which determine in what cases this strange dash into reality can be made are not known to us. And so love is unreasonable. But only because reason is not yet worthy of it. It cannot reveal—though

in philosophy it may predict—the truth which can alone justify love. When reason is perfected, love will consent to be reasonable.

Fantastic as all this may seem, the second part of my essay, on which I must now enter, will, I fear, seem much worse. I have endeavoured to prove that all perfect life would lead up to and culminate in love. I want now to go further, and to assert that as life became perfect all other elements would actually die away—that knowledge and volition would disappear, swallowed up in a higher reality, and that love would reveal itself, not only as the highest, but as the only thing in the universe.

If we look close enough, we shall find, I think, that both knowledge and volition postulate a perfection to which they can never attain; that consequently if we take them as ultimate realities we shall be plunged into contradictions, and that the only way to account for their existence at all is to view them as mere sides or aspects of a higher reality which realises the perfection they postulate. This perfection lies in the production of a complete harmony between the subject and the object, by the combination of perfect unity between them with perfect discrimination of the one from the other. And this, as I shall endeavour to prove, is impossible without transcending the limits of these two correlative activities.

In the first place, is it possible that the duality which makes them two activities, rather than one, can be maintained in the Absolute? For if it cannot be maintained, then knowledge and volition would both be merged in a single form of spirit. We have seen that the object of both is the same—to produce the harmony described in Hegel's definition of the Absolute Idea. What is it that separates them from one another, and is the separation one which can be considered as ultimate?

The most obvious suggestion is that volition leads directly to action, which knowledge does not, except indirectly by affecting volition. If however we look more closely we shall find that this is not a sufficient distinction. We may perhaps leave out of account the fact that a desire however strong, for something which we know is perfectly

impossible, or something which no action can affect, does not provoke us to action at all. No action tends to be produced by a desire that two and two may make five, or by a desire that the wind may blow from the west. But even in cases where the process of development is taking place, and the harmony between desire and reality is being gradually brought about, it is by no means always the case that it is brought about by action. There are two other alternatives. It may be brought about by a discovery in the field of knowledge, which reveals a harmony which had previously escaped observation. Discovery in itself, certainly, an action. But it is not the act of discovery which here produces the harmony, but the truth which it reveals, and the truth is not an action. We have not gained the harmony because we have changed the environment, but because we have understood it. And the act of discovery is the result of our desire to understand, not of our desire for the result discovered.

The other possible means of reconciliation is by the desire changing itself into conformity with the environment, either through an intellectual conviction that the previous desire was mistaken, or by that process of dialectic development inherent in finite desires.

Let us suppose, for example, that a desire that vindictive justice should exhibit itself in the constitution of the universe finds itself in conflict with the fact, known by empirical observation, that the wicked often prosper. Some degree of harmony between desires and facts may be attained in this case by means of action as affecting the political and social environment. But this alone could never realise the demand. We have however two other possible methods of reconciliation. Philosophy or theology may assure us that there is a future life, and that in it our desires will be fulfilled. Or we may, either by argument or by a gradual development of our notions of the desirable, so change our views as no longer to require that the universe should exhibit vindictive justice. In either case we should have attained to harmony without action following as a consequence of our volition.

Or, secondly, it may be suggested that the distinction lies in the activity or passivity of the mind. In knowledge, it might be said, our object is to create a picture in our minds, answering to the reality which exists outside them, and based on data received from external sources. Since the test of the mental picture is its conformity to the external reality, the mind must be passive. On the other hand, in volition the mind supplies an ideal by means of which we measure outside reality. If the reality does not correspond to our desires, we condemn it as unsatisfactory, and, if the thwarted desires belong to our moral nature, we condemn it as wrong. Here, it might be urged, the mind is in a position of activity.

There is unquestionably some truth in this view. The greater weight is no doubt laid, in knowledge on the external object, in volition on the consciousness of the agent. But we must seek a more accurate expression of it. For the mind is not passive in knowledge, nor purely active in volition. In considering the last argument we saw that the harmony may be produced, wholly or in part, by the alteration of the desires till they coincide with the facts. In so far as this is the case, the mind is in a passive position, and is altered by external facts, whether the result comes from arguments drawn from the existence of those facts, or by reaction from the contact with them in actual life.

We may go further, and say, not only that this may happen in some cases, but that it must happen in all cases to some extent. For otherwise in the action of mind on the environment we should have left no place for any reaction, and by doing so should deny the reality of that member of the relation which we condemn to passivity. But if the as yet unharmonized environment was unreal, when compared with the as yet unembodied ideal, the process will cease to exist. If the environment, as such, has no existence our demands cannot be said to be realised in it. If it has real existence, it must react on our demands.

And again it cannot be said that the mind is purely passive in knowledge. The data which it receives from outside are subsumed under categories which belong to the



nature of the mind itself, and the completed knowledge is very different from the data with which it began. Indeed if we attempt to consider the data before any reaction of the mind has altered them we find that they cannot enter into consciousness—that is, they do not exist. If conceptions without perceptions are empty, it is no less true that perceptions without conceptions are blind.

Let us make one more effort to find a ground of distinction. I believe that we may succeed with the following—in knowledge we accept the facts as valid and condemn our ideas if they do not agree with the facts; in volition we accept our ideas as valid, and condemn the facts if they do not agree with our ideas.

Suppose a case of imperfect harmony. That which, as far as we can see at the time, is the fundamental nature of our desires, disagrees with what, as far as we can see at the time, is the true state of the facts. What is to be done? The first thing is, of course, to recognise that something must be wrong somewhere, since, in the case supposed, there would be a want of the ideal harmony both in knowledge and volition. But, when we have realised this, what can we do? Since the two sides, the internal and external, are not in harmony, we cannot accept both as valid. To accept neither as valid would be impossible—because self contradictory—scepticism and quietism. We must accept one and reject the other. Now in knowledge we accept the facts as valid, and condemn our ideas, in so far as they differ from them, as mistaken. In volition, on the other hand, we accept the ideas as valid, and condemn the facts in so far as we differ from them, as wrong. If it should appear to us that a rational and righteous universe would involve personal immortality, while there were reasons to disbelieve that personal immortality existed, then we should have to take up a double position. On the one hand we should be bound to admit that our longing for immortality would not be gratified, however much we wanted it. On the other hand we should be bound to assert that the universe was wrong in not granting our desires, however certain it was that they would not be granted.

Two words of explanation seem necessary here. In the

first place, what has been said assumes that every effort has been made to produce the harmony. We have no right to condemn the universe as evil on account of an unfulfilled desire till we have enquired carefully if it is a mere caprice, or really so fundamental a part of our nature that its realisation is essential to permanent harmony. And we not bound to condemn our ideas as untrue because the facts seem against them at first sight. Secondly, when I have spoken of internal and external, or ideas and facts, I have meant to indicate the opposition of subject and object. An internal phenomenon, whether an idea or a feeling, when taken as an object to be observed by the active subject, counts as an external fact.

I am far from wishing to assert—in fact it is incompatible with the idealist position with which this paper started—that there is in reality any possible want of harmony. That some harmony must exist is evident. Without it we could not have any knowledge at all, and so could never become conscious of any possible want of harmony. And the possible want of *complete* harmony from the point of view of volition involves the existence of *some* harmony between our needs and the facts. For without it we could never demand that the facts should realise our desires—nor indeed could we exist at all. There must be some harmony then, and it is the aim of the critical philosophy—culminating in the Dialectic—to prove that the existence of any harmony involves its existence in full completeness. But, however that may be, some philosophies reject this endeavour, and even those who admit it, must acknowledge that in an infinite number of particular cases they are quite unable to see *where* the harmony is, although on philosophic grounds they may be certain that it must exist somehow. And, finally, even in some cases where we may intellectually perceive the harmony our nature may not be so under the control of our reason, as to enable us to feel the harmony, if it happens to conflict with our passions. In all these cases it will be necessary to act in the face of a want of harmony, and in all these cases we must give the facts the supremacy in the sphere of knowledge and the ideals the supremacy in the sphere of volition upon pain of spiritual high treason.



It has become rather a commonplace lately, since science, for its sins, received the somewhat severe punishment of popularity, that one of our most imperative duties is intellectual humility, to admit the truth to be true, however unpleasant or unrighteous it may appear to us. But, correlative to this duty there is another no less imperative,—that of ethical self-assertion. If no amount of "ought" can produce the slightest "is," it is no less true that no amount of "is" can produce "ought." It is of the very essence of human will, and of that effort to find the fundamentally desirable which we call morality, that it claims the right to judge the whole universe. This is the categorical imperative of the idealists, and we find it again in Mill's preference of hell to the flattering of an unjust deity. Nor is it only in the interests of virtue as such that the will is categorical. Pleasure, unless absolutely wrong, is no more to be treated lightly than virtue. If all the gods of all the universes, from Oannes of the Chaldeans to the Unknowable of Mr. Herbert Spencer united to give me one second's unnecessary toothache, I should not only be entitled, but bound, to judge and to condemn them. We have no more right to be servile than to be arrogant. And while our desires must serve in the kingdom of the true, they rule in the kingdom of the good.

We must note in passing that we are quite entitled to argue that a thing is because it ought to be, or ought to be because it is, when we have once satisfied ourselves that the harmony does exist, and that the universe is essentially rational and righteous. To those who believe in a benevolent God, for example, it is perfectly competent to argue that we must be immortal because the absence of immortality would make life a ghastly farce, or that toothache must be good because God sends it. It is only when, or in as far as, the harmony has not yet been established, that such an argument is an unhallowed assignment unto God of the things which are Cæsar's, and unto Cæsar of the things which are God's, to the embarrassment of both parties.

If, then, we have succeeded in finding the distinction between knowledge and volition, we must conclude that it

is one which can have no place in the Absolute. For we have seen that the distinction turns upon which side of the opposition shall give way, when there is opposition, and not harmony, between the subject and the object. In the Absolute there can be no opposition, for there can be no want of harmony, as the Absolute is, by its definition, the harmony made perfect. And not only can there be no want of harmony, but there can be no possibility that the harmony should ever become wanting. Everything must have a cause, and if it were possible that the harmony which exists at a given time should subsequently be broken, a cause must coexist with the harmony capable of destroying it. When the harmony is universal, the cause would have to exist within it. Now when we speak of things which are only harmonious with regard to certain relations, or to a certain degree, we can speak of a harmony which carries within it the seeds of its own dissolution. Such is the life of an organism, which necessarily leads to death, or the system of a sun and planets, which collapses as it loses its energy. But when we come to consider a harmony which pervades objects in all their relations, and which is absolutely perfect, anything which could produce a disturbance in it, would be itself a disturbance, and is excluded by the hypothesis. This will be seen more clearly if we remember that the harmony is one of conscious spirit. The consciousness must be all-embracing, and therefore the cause of the possible future disturbance must be recognised as such. And the possibility of such a disturbance must produce at once some degree of doubt, fear, or anxiety, which would itself and at once be fatal to harmony.

It follows that, since not even the possibility of disturbance can enter into the Absolute, the distinction between knowledge and volition, depending as it does entirely on the course pursued when such a disturbance exists, becomes, not only irrelevant, but absolutely unmeaning. And in that case the life of Spirit, when the Absolute has been attained, will consist in the harmony which is the essence of both knowledge and volition, but will have lost all those characteristics which differentiate them from one another, and give them their specific character.

Before passing on to further arguments, we must consider some objections which may be raised to what has been already said. The most obvious, perhaps, is that no trace of the asserted union of knowledge and volition is to be found in our experience. We often find, in some particular matter, a harmony which is, at any rate, so far complete that no want of it is visible, in which our desires and our environment show no perceptible discordance. And yet knowledge and volition, though in agreement, do not show the least sign of losing their distinctness. On the one hand we assert that a given content is real, and on the other hand that it is desirable. But the difference of meaning between the predicates "true" and "good" is as great as ever.

But no harmony to which we can attain in the middle of a life otherwise inharmonious can ever be perfect, even over a limited extent. For as we saw above (p. ) the universal reciprocity which must exist between all things in the same universe would prevent anything from becoming perfect, until everything had done so. And a harmony between two imperfections could never be complete, since the imperfect remains subject to the dialectic, and is therefore transitory. Even supposing, however, that such a limited harmony could be perfect, it could never exclude the possibility of disturbance. The possibility was excluded in the case of a universal harmony, because the ground of disturbance could not exist within the harmony, and there was nowhere else for it to exist. But here such a ground might always be found outside. And while there is any meaning in even the possibility of a discrepancy between our demands and reality, there is no reason to expect the separation of knowledge and volition to cease.

To our assertion that knowledge and volition, as they become perfect, are merged in a unity which is neither of them, it may be objected that we have already said that this unity will contain all that part of both activities which constitutes their real meaning—what Hegel calls their "truth." All that would be found in perfect knowledge and volition is to be found there, and nothing is left out except the negative element, which, in so far as it is found, marks the

imperfection of the subject matter. Ought we not rather to say, therefore, that in the Absolute we find both knowledge and volition, instead of saying that we find neither. It is no doubt true that all the "truth" of both sides will be found in the resulting unity, and that nothing but a negative element is left out. But then it is just this negative element which distinguishes knowledge and volition from one another, and so makes them what they are in ordinary life, where they are unquestionably distinguished from one another. The "truth" of the two may be found in the unity. But the point of our argument has been that, as separate things, they are imperfect, and therefore it is that element in their present condition which is not their "truth," which separates them, and makes them the activities we know. To say that they are both contained in a unity is really equivalent to saying that neither of them is there. For all that makes their duality, is their opposition to one another, and before they could be brought into such a unity, their opposition, and therefore their duality, must have vanished.

Again, it may be said that the Absolute, as the end of the dialectic process, and as summing up in itself all the meaning of that process, must contain not only the positive element which is found in knowledge and volition, but also that quality, whatever it was, which caused them in the lower stages of the process to appear as independent and opposed activities. If we admit that this demand is one which may fairly be made on the synthesis of a process, we may answer the objection by pointing out that, if the meaning of the past imperfection is to be found in the synthesis, it must be a meaning which explains it away. For in no other form could the explanation of the opposition be found in the unity. And if the meaning is one of this sort, then it still remains true that knowledge and volition, as such, can have no place in the Absolute.

Our attention has so far been directed to an attempt to prove, by means of a comparison between the nature of the Absolute itself and the nature of knowledge and volition, that the process of the dialectic must have passed beyond knowledge and volition before it can reach the Absolute.



It is also, I think, possible to arrive at this conclusion without carrying our enquiries beyond the characteristics of the two separate forms. For these bear in themselves the mark of their finitude and transitoriness, since they postulate, throughout their activities, a goal which they can never reach. We started this enquiry on the basis of an idealistic philosophy, and we are therefore entitled to assert that every postulate which Spirit makes must be realised, either in itself, or by the attainment of a higher end in which it is transcended. If knowledge and volition, then, cannot realise their own ideal, we are bound to hold that the dialectic process will not stop with them, but will carry us forward to some higher stage where the realisation will be found. Or—to directly apply to this special case the grounds on which idealism bases its conviction of the general rationality of the universe—we may put the case this way. If it be found that each act of knowledge and volition postulates the ideal, we shall have to choose between admitting the validity of the ideal, and denying the validity of all knowledge and volition. The latter is impossible, because self-contradictory. The very statement or thought which explicitly made the assertion would implicitly deny it—deny it as to volition, because to make an assertion is to act, and deny it as to knowledge because we should assert the validity of a proposition. If an ideal is implied in all knowledge and volition, therefore, we have no alternative but to admit its validity, and to account nothing ultimate which leaves it unrealised.

This ideal is (cp. p. ) the combination of complete unity between the subject and object with complete differentiation between them. Leaving volition for the present, let us consider, first, whether knowledge does postulate this, and then whether it can realise it.

Knowledge is a state of the subject's mind which gives information as to the nature of the object. This implies a unity between the two. Of the elements of knowledge some are given as data from outside by the object, and that these should be able to pass into the mind of the subject indicates a connection between them. On the other hand, some elements of knowledge—the categories—are

supplied by the mind itself, and that we should be able to predicate of the object that which is supplied us by the nature of the subject clearly implies a community of nature between them. And the differentiation is no less necessary than the unity. From the point of view of knowledge, the primary importance of differentiation may be said to lie in the necessity that the object should get its due, though the individuality of the subject is as essential. If the fact that the knowledge is ours, involves the unity of the subject and object, the fact that the knowledge is of something outside us involves their differentiation. To destroy the reality or significance of the external object of knowledge, is to destroy the reality or significance of knowledge, to which the assertion that it is true of something outside itself is essential. No one is likely to deny the existence of the subject in knowledge, and so, if the unity is pressed to the exclusion of the differentiation, it is the object that must suffer. But as the object vanishes, knowledge changes into dreams or fancies, and these, however interesting as objects of knowledge, are absolutely different from knowledge itself.

All knowledge thus requires the combination of unity and differentiation. Complete knowledge will require the combination of complete unity with complete differentiation. But, more than this, all knowledge, however imperfect and fragmentary, implies the completeness of both elements, and has only truth and validity, in so far as it is justified in demanding this postulate. In all knowledge we combine and arrange the data by means of some category. As was mentioned in the last paragraph, we have no direct evidence whatever of the applicability of these categories to anything outside us, for they are not given in the data which we receive from outside. They cannot be communicated by the senses which are our only avenues of approach to the object. We cannot smell Casualty, nor taste Teleology, nor see Organic Unity. And yet we apply these categories drawn from the nature of our own minds to the outside reality. In so far as we do so, we assume a unity of nature between the mind which is the subject of knowledge, and the external reality which is its object. Now the dialectic



shows that to assert any one category of reality is to assert all. And therefore any single act of knowledge involves the predication of all the categories as part of the nature of the object, as we already know them to be of the subject. This again is an assertion of the entire unity between the two, so that my knowledge of a single truth about an object involves the assertion that it is possible for me to know it through and through. But we have seen that if the unity overpowers the differentiation knowledge ceases. If therefore complete unity is implied, there must be also implied complete differentiation.

Knowledge postulates, then, this combination of anti-thetical qualities. Is it possible that the postulate can ever be realised in knowledge itself?

The action of knowledge consists in ascribing predicates to the objects of knowledge. (In logic, that to which the predicates are ascribed is termed the subject. But since I have been using the word subject, in its epistemological sense, to denote the knowing consciousness, I shall continue to speak of the subject of the propositions which that consciousness contains as the object as distinguished from its qualities, or specifically as the *logical* subject). All our knowledge of the object we owe to the predicates which we ascribe to it. But our object is not a mere assembly of predicates. There is also the unity in which they cohere, which may be called epistemologically the abstract object, and logically the abstract subject.

Here—as in most other places in the universe—we are met by a paradox. The withdrawal of the abstract object leaves nothing but a collection of predicates, and a collection of predicates, taken by itself, is a mere unreality. Predicates cannot exist without a central unity in which they can cohere. But when we enquire what is this central unity which gives reality to the object, we find that its unreality is as certain as the unreality of the predicates, and perhaps even more obvious. For if we attempt to make a single statement about this abstract object—even to say that it exists—we find ourselves merely adding to the number of predicates, and not attaining our purpose,—to know what the substratum was in which all the predicates

inhere, which is not assisted by knowing that another predicate inheres in it.

Thus the abstract object is an unreality, and yet, if it is withdrawn the residue of the concrete object becomes an unreality too. Such a position is not uncommon in metaphysics. All reality is concrete. All concrete ideas can be split up into abstract elements. If we split up the concrete idea which corresponds to some real thing into its constituent abstractions, we shall have a group of ideas which in their unity correspond to a reality, but when separated are self-contradictory and unreal.

The position of the abstract object reminds us of a similar abstraction which has received more attention in metaphysics—the abstract subject. This has been called by Kant the synthetic unity of apperception, and is sometimes spoken of less technically, though not without ambiguity, as personality or self-consciousness. While on the one hand mental phenomena could not be a part of spiritual life, or indeed be conceived as existing at all, unless they cohered in, or referred to, a central unity, by virtue of their connection with which they all form part of one self-conscious life,—on the other hand, this central unity, considered apart from the phenomena which find their centre in it, is a mere blank, a form without content, of which nothing can be said. This analogy between the abstract object and the abstract subject is very suggestive, especially when we remember that in an idealist philosophy all reality is Spirit, and that consequently its central unity is both an abstract subject and an abstract object. We shall have to return to this point later on.

This abstract object is described by Mr. F. H. Bradley, in an article entitled "Reality and Thought." ("Mind" XIII. p. 370) from which I first got the idea of this paper. He speaks of it as the This of the object, in opposition to the What, which consists of the predicates we have found to be applicable to it. While knowledge remains imperfect, the This has in it the possibility of an indefinite number of other qualities, besides the definite number which have been ascertained and embodied in predicates. When knowledge becomes perfect—as perfect as it is cap.

able of becoming—this possibility would disappear, as it seems to me, although Mr. Bradley does not mention this point. In perfect knowledge all qualities of the object would be known, and the coherence of our knowledge as a systematic whole would be the warrant for the completeness of the enumeration. But even here the abstract This would still remain, and prove itself irreducible to anything else. To attempt to know it is like attempting to jump on the shadow of one's own head. For all propositions are the assertion of a partial unity between the subject and the predicate. The This on the other hand is just what distinguishes the subject from the predicate.

It is the existence of the This which renders it impossible to regard knowledge as a self-subsistent whole, and makes it necessary to consider it merely as an approach to something else. In the This we have something which is at once within and without knowledge, which it dares not neglect and cannot deal with.

For when we say that the This cannot be known, we do not mean, of course, that we cannot know of its existence. We know of its existence, because we can perceive, by analysis, that it is an essential element of the concrete object. But the very definition which this analysis gives us shows that we can know nothing more about the This—that there is, indeed, nothing more to know. To know merely that something exists is to present a problem to knowledge which it must seek to answer. To know that a thing exists is to know it as immediate and contingent. Knowledge demands that such a thing should be mediated and rationalised. This, as we have seen, cannot be done. The impossibility is no reproach to the rationality of the universe, for reality is no more mere mediation than it is mere immediacy, and the immediacy of the This combines with the mediation of the What to make up the concrete whole of the Spirit. But it *is* a reproach to the adequacy of knowledge as an activity of Spirit that it should persist in demanding what cannot and ought not to be obtained. Without immediacy, without the central unity of the object, the mediation and the predicates which make up knowledge would vanish as unmeaning. Yet knowledge is

compelled by its own nature to attempt this suicidal exploit, and to feel itself baffled and thwarted when it cannot succeed. Surely an activity with such a contradiction inherent in it can never be a complete exponent of the Absolute.

In the first place the existence of the This is incompatible with the attainment of the ideal of unity in knowledge. For here we have an element, whose existence in reality we are forced to admit, but which is characterised by the presence of that which is essentially alien to the nature of the knowing consciousness in its activity. In so far as reality contains a This it cannot be brought into complete unison with the knowing mind, which, as an object, has of course its aspect of immediacy like any other object, but which, as the knowing subject, finds all unresolvable immediacy to be fundamentally opposed to its work of rationalisation. The real cannot be completely pictured in the mind, and the unity of knowledge is therefore defective.

And this brings with it a defective differentiation. For while the This cannot be brought into the unity of knowledge, it is unquestionably a part of reality. And so the failure of knowledge to bring it into unity with itself involves that the part of the object which *is* brought into unity with the subject is only an abstraction from the full object. The individuality of the object thus fails to be represented, and so its full differentiation from the subject fails to be represented also. The result is that we know objects, so to speak, from outside, whereas, to know them in their full truth, we ought to know them from inside. That every object\* has a real centre of its own appears from the dialectic. For we have seen that the conclusion from that is that all reality consists of spirits, which are individuals. And, apart from this, the fact that the object

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\* In saying "every object," I do not necessarily mean every chair, or even every amoeba. Behind all appearance there is reality. This reality we believe, on the authority of the Dialectic, to be divided into individuals. It is these centres of reality which I here call objects. But as to *how many* centres of reality there may be behind a given mass of phenomena we do not know. Of course each self-conscious spirit is one object and no more. It is with regard to the reality behind what is called inorganic life that the difficulty arises.



is more or less independent as against us—and without some such independence knowledge would be impossible, as has been already pointed out—renders it certain that every object has an individual unity to some extent. Now knowledge fails to give this unity its right. The unity of the object is found in its This, and its This is to knowledge something alien. It sees it to be the centre of the object in a sense, but only a dead, mathematical centre, not a living and unifying centre, such as we know that the synthetic unity of apperception is to our own lives, which we have the advantage of seeing from inside. The centre of the object appears to us as a mere *caput mortuum*, produced by abstracting all possible predicates, not a real centre, such as the centre of gravity in a body, much less a vivifying centre, such as the animal life in an organism. And while we thus view the object from our standpoint, and not its own, knowledge can never represent the object so faithfully as to attain its own ideal.

And here we see the reason why knowledge can never represent quite adequately the harmony of the universe. We saw above (p. 12) that when knowledge should have reached the greatest perfection of which it is capable there would still remain one question unanswered, Why is the whole universe what it is, and not something else? The possibility of asking this question depends, as it seems to me, on the existence of the This, which knowledge is unable to bring into unity with the knowing subject. The This is essential to the reality of the object, and it is that part of the object to which it owes its independence of the subject. And the question naturally arises, Why should not this core of objectivity have been clothed with other qualities than those which it has, and with which the subject finds itself in harmony?

The question arises because the existence of the harmony is dependent on the This. The This alone gives reality to the object. If it vanished, the harmony would not change into a disharmony, but disappear altogether. And the This, as we have seen, must always be for knowledge a something alien and irrational, because it must always be an unresolved immediate. Now a harmony which depends on

something alien and irrational must always appear contingent and defective. Why is there a This at all? Why is it just those qualities which give a harmony for us that the favour of the This has raised to reality? To answer these questions would be to mediate the This, and that would destroy it.

It may be urged, as against this argument, that we do not stand in such a position of opposition and alienation towards the objective This. For we ourselves are objects of knowledge as well as knowing subjects, and our own abstract personality, which is the centre of our knowledge, is also the This of an object. Now the interconnection of the qualities of all different objects, which would be perfect in perfect knowledge, would enable us to show why all reality existed, and why it is what it is, if we could only show it of a single fragment of reality. The difficulty lies in reaching the abstract realness of the real at all by means of knowledge. And if, by means of our own existence as objects, we were able to establish a single connection with the objective world, in which the immediate would not mean the alien, no other connection would be required. The last remaining opposition of the object to the subject would disappear.

The objection, however, does not hold. For the self as the object of knowledge is as much opposed to the self as the subject, as any other object could be. We learn its qualities by arguments from data given by the "internal sense" as we learn the qualities of other objects by arguments from data given by the external senses. We are immediately certain of the first, but we are no less immediately certain of the second. And the central unity of our own nature is no more an object of direct knowledge than the central unities of other objects, and for the same reasons. We become aware of its existence by analysing what is implied in having ourselves as objects, and we become aware of the central unities of other things by analysing what is implied in having them for objects. The one is no more immediate than the other. Of course our own selves are not really alien to us, although we know them immediately. But then the existence of knowledge

implies, as we have seen, that other reality is not really alien to us, although we know it immediately. It is knowledge which fails to represent the immediate except as alien.

We have thus traced the origin of the abstract possibility of disharmony in the universe. We saw in the first part of this essay that it was unmeaning, since it would be impossible for any reality to be destroyed or altered, unless the same happened to all reality, and the possibility of this, which has no common ground with actuality, is an unmeaning phrase. And we have now seen another reason why the possibility is unmeaning. For we have traced it to the persistence of thought, in considering its essential condition as its essential enemy. The existence of such a miscalled possibility, therefore, tells nothing against the rationality of the universe. But it does tell against the adequacy of knowledge as an expression of the universe. By finding a flaw in perfection, where no flaw exists, it pronounces its own condemnation. If the possibility is unmeaning, knowledge is imperfect in being compelled to regard it as a possibility.

It seems at first sight absurd to talk of knowledge as inadequate. If it was so, how could we know it? What right have we to condemn it as imperfect when the judge is *ipso facto* the same person as the culprit? This is, of course, so far true, that if knowledge could not show us its own ideal, we could never know that it did not realise it. But there is a great difference between indicating an ideal and realising it. It is possible—and I have endeavoured to show that it is the fact—that knowledge can do the one, and not the other. When we ask about the abstract conditions of reality, it is able to demonstrate that harmony must exist, and that immediacy is compatible with it, and essential to it. But when it is asked to show in detail *how* the harmony exists, which it has shown *must* exist, it is unable to do so. There is here no contradiction in our estimate of reason, but there *is* a contradiction in reason, which prevents us from regarding it as ultimate, and which forces us to look for some higher stage, where the contradiction may disappear.

Let us now turn to volition, and consider, in the first



place, whether it also implies the combination of complete unity with complete differentiation, and, in the second place, whether it also is unable to realise the ideal which it sets before itself.

That volition implies unity is tolerably obvious. Its demand is that an ideal which it finds in the mind should be realised in the objects round it—that is, that the mind and the object should be brought into unity. And with the unity must come the differentiation. The primary interest of volition may be said to be in the differentiation of the subject, while in knowledge it lay rather in the differentiation of the object. The desirable would cease to be such, if we so completely identified ourselves with the pursuit, that, in attaining our end, we did not distinguish ourselves from it. That we find satisfaction in a thing proves our unity with it, but that it is we who find satisfaction proves our differentiation. Otherwise we should not so much find satisfaction, as lose ourselves.

But that the subject should be completely differentiated involves that the object should be so too. For the two developments are inseparable. The logical necessity of this can be shown by the dialectic, and empirical examples of it are furnished by psychology, for example in the observation of the minds of children. As the consciousness of an individual subject to be satisfied disappears, satisfaction gradually becomes, first the passivity of satiated instinct, then the still lower stability which arises when an unconscious thing is in harmony with its environment, and finally even harmony disappears in a blank unity equivalent to nonentity. And in each of these stages the individuality of the object falls out of the unity in proportion to the disappearance of the subject. Besides this, the fact that all volition can be expressed in the form of a demand carries its satisfaction, of necessity, beyond the consciousness which demands it, and so far as it is not perceived to be embodied in some real object, it is not perceived at all.

Thus, in so far as the satisfaction of volition is attained, it involves complete unity and complete differentiation. And, going further than this, we may say that any satisfaction, however incomplete, implicitly asserts the



complete unity and differentiation of the subject which experiences it and the object which affords it. For the existence of any satisfaction shows a unity which is equivalent to the assertion of some community of nature between the two. Now the dialectic shows us that, if we are able to assert of any subject-matter any category of the logic, we are entitled to proceed to the Absolute Idea; and we are thus able to assert of both subject and object that they are manifestations of that idea, and—therefore—perfectly in accord, and perfectly distinct.

How far can volition carry out the ideal which it thus places before itself? In considering this question, we find that we must distinguish, in the object of satisfaction, the same two elements which we have already observed in the object of knowledge. The satisfaction which an object affords to us is due to certain qualities which harmonise with the ideals of our volition. But an object is not an assembly of qualities. Besides them we must have the central unity, which gives uniqueness and reality to the object, which is not a quality, but which determines that the qualities exist—the difference, in short, between the hundred thalers which will pay your debts—to use Kant's immortal example—and the exactly similar hundred thalers which only amuse your imagination.

We are confronted, then, in volition, by the same distinction in the object between the *This* and the *What* which is apparent in the object of knowledge. And with it recurs the same difficulty. We can no more experience satisfaction, without the *This*, than we can have knowledge. Yet it is as impossible to find satisfaction in the *This*, as it is to know it. For the *This* has no qualities in which we can find the demands of our nature realised. It may be objected that it is a *This*, that it is real, and so are we, and that this is a community in which satisfaction might be found. But, as Mr. Bradley has shown in his *Logic*, (p. 69.) This can never be true as a symbol, and we find no community between things in the fact that each of them has a *This* in it. That to us as real beings there should be opposed in the *This* an immediate reality is a ground rather of discord than of harmony. The only

quality which the immediately real can be said to have is self-assertion, and a common desire for self-assertion is not a ground for concord. The reality of the object would, taken by itself, be in such harmony with our own reality, as was produced between the Emperor and the King of France on the occasion when they wanted precisely the same thing—namely the city of Milan.

The existence of the This in the object will thus be fatal, in the first place, to the unity of satisfaction. For in the This we find an element of the object which will not allow itself to be regarded as a means to our end. In any case, as an independent reality, it offers a negative resistance to our consideration of the universe from our own point of view. And the results of the dialectic make this into a positive challenge, when we learn that all reality must be individual like ourselves, and must, like ourselves, have an end of its own.

The assertion that perfect satisfaction requires us to consider everything else as a means to our own end may arouse some opposition. Is there not such a thing as unselfish action, as self-sacrifice? And in that highest content of satisfaction which we call moral good, is not it laid down by high authority that the fundamental law is to treat other individuals as ends and not as means?

It is undoubtedly true that our satisfaction need not be selfish. But it must, I maintain, be self-regarding, and self-centred. This implies no moral blame, and no denial of disinterested action, unless we assume, contrary to the corollaries of Idealism, that the nature of Spirit is essentially selfish. But it does imply, I think, that the existence of objects independent of ourselves, while necessary to satisfaction, is incompatible with its purity.

Many of our desires are not for our own pleasure—such as the desire to win a game, or to eat when we are hungry. But these are still desires for our own good. If the result did not appear to us one which would be desirable for us, we should not desire it. Put in this way, indeed, the fact that volition and its satisfaction are self-centred appears almost a truism. And it is possible that a sense of duty or a feeling of sympathy may determine us to unselfish

action—to action painful to ourselves, and which, apart from those feelings, we could not regard as our good. But such action implies that we do regard virtue, or the happiness of others, as our highest good. Even if we take Mill's extreme case of going to hell, we must conceive that the following of virtue as long as possible, even if the result was eternal misery and degradation, presented itself to him as his highest good. Self-sacrifice, strictly speaking, is impossible, and unmoral. We can sacrifice the lower parts of our nature. But if we were not actuated by some part of our nature, the action would cease to be ours. It would fall into the same class as the actions of lunacy, of hypnotism, of unconscious habit. The will is ours, and the motive which determines will must be a motive which has power for us. In other words our volition is always directed towards our own good, and has always ourselves for its end.

And this is not interfered with by the possibility and the obligation, which unquestionably exist, of regarding other individuals as ends. We may do this with the most absolute sincerity. But if we are asked why we do it, we do not find it an ultimate necessity. We can, and do, insert another term. We may perhaps ascribe our conduct to a sense of sympathy with others. In this case the reference to self is obvious. Or, taking a more objective position, we may say that we do it because it is right. Now the obligation of virtue is admitted by all schools to be purely internal. This is upheld alike by those who imagine it to be an empirical growth, and by those who suppose it eternal and fundamental to Spirit. That virtue must be followed for its own sake—and otherwise our motive is not virtuous—is only another way of saying that we conceive virtue to be our highest good. Kant made the treatment of individuals as ends the primary law of morals. But the existence of morals depended on the Categorical Imperative. And the obligation of this on the moral agent—his recognition of it as binding—was equivalent to an assertion that *he* adopted it. The adoption must not be conceived as optional or morality would become capricious; but it must be conceived as self-realisation, or

it would be unmeaning to speak of the agent, or his motive, as virtuous.

Now it is not recognition of this kind which the individuality of the object demands. The object as real claims to be considered as an end in itself, not because we shall in that way best fulfil our own ends, but in its own right. And this prevents perfect unity, for volition can acquiesce in nothing which claims in its own right, and which is entirely indifferent as to whether its claim is convenient to the subject or not. It can grant only recognition analogous to that which some moralists give to the duty of kindness to animals, when they deny that the lower animals have any rights to be violated, but recommend kindness to them as producing a desirable state of mind in the agent. And to such recognition as this, the This of the object will appear alien and inharmonious.

In the same way, the differentiation also must be imperfect. That part of the object which is brought into unity with the subject is only a part, and the omission, though only of an abstraction, renders what is left abstract only. It is not in the objects themselves that we find satisfaction, but in the results of the objects as affecting ourselves. The objective world may be said to resemble for us the fragments of a child's dissected map. Only their external relations to ourselves and to one another have any significance for us. They are individuals, they live from within outwards. But as we find satisfaction in them, we are aware of them from without inwards, and their centre, instead of being a living unity is a dead abstraction. We fail, then, here as in knowledge, to do justice to the independence of the object.

And, as in knowledge, we find that the harmony is imperfect. We found there that the rationality of things depended in the long run on the immediate fact that they are what they are. So here we find that their righteousness—their response to the demands of our own nature—depends on the same fact. And, for volition as well as for knowledge, this immediate presents itself as a contingent. The immediate is as non-friendly as it is non-rational, and retains always the possibility of becoming actually hostile,



as of becoming actually irrational. The immediacy of the object is for us a dead abstraction, and we are haunted by the possibility of its having had other qualities than those which it has as a matter of fact. Our method of looking at it has brought it and its qualities into an unreal independence of one another, in which their connection appears contingent. And such a possibility of disharmony is itself disharmony. To expect, however faintly, an evil, is an evil itself.

The possibility is indeed a meaningless one. To say that the righteousness of the universe is contingent on the universe as a whole being what it is, is equivalent to saying that it is not contingent at all. The condemnation must fall on volition itself, since it is unable to bring about complete harmony, owing to its regarding as a defect what is not really a defect. Like knowledge, it slanders the universe. The immediate is necessary for all satisfaction. The inherent contingency of the immediate can be shown to be a delusion. But it is a delusion that volition cannot get rid of. If it is balked in its attempt to treat everything as a means it declares its work imperfect, and, if it could ever succeed in its attempt, it would find its work destroyed.

To sum up. If this analysis has been correct, it will prove that neither knowledge nor volition can completely express the harmony of Spirit, since their existence implies that an immediate object does exist, while their perfection would imply that it did not. At the same time the dialectic assures us that the complete harmony must exist, since it is implied in the existence of any harmony at all, which again is implied in the undeniable existence of knowledge and volition. We must therefore look to find the complete expression of the harmony, which will be the ultimate form of Spirit, elsewhere.

Of the nature of this form we are now in a position to say two things. In the first place, it must synthesise the opposition which has been pointed out to exist between knowledge and volition, in so far as knowledge accepts the object, and volition the subject, as valid in the case of a disagreement. In the second place, it must be able to recognise the immediate without finding it to be necessarily alien or contingent.

This is all we can tell of the nature of the ultimate form of Spirit by general reasoning. And if that ultimate form is something of which, in our present lives, we can have no consciousness, it will be all that we can tell about it at all. But if we find that part of our present experience answers these tests, we may infer that the Absolute, though far more perfect, is in nature similar to this experience, and again, that this part of our lives, though doubtless greatly deficient in purity and intensity, is a fully concrete reality, requiring to be developed only, to reach perfection, and not like knowledge and volition, to be synthesised and transformed.

Can we find any such experience? Knowledge and volition have been tried and found wanting. The only remaining independent element of consciousness is feeling, that is, pleasure and pain. This however, will not serve our purpose. It does not enable us to regard an immediate object as not alien, for it has nothing to do with objects at all. It is a pure self-reference of the subject. And this, while it makes it in some ways the most intimate and personal part of our lives, prevents it from ever being self-subsistent, or filling consciousness by itself. For our self-consciousness only develops by bringing itself in contact with an external object. The definition of the Absolute Idea shows that the appreciation of an object is necessary to Spirit. Feeling therefore is only an element in states of consciousness, not a state by itself. We are conscious of relations to an object, and in this consciousness we see an element of pleasure or pain. But pleasure or pain by itself can never make the content of our minds.

The one thing left is emotion. For our present purpose, we may perhaps roughly define emotion as a state of consciousness tinged with feeling, or rather, since feeling is never quite absent, a state of consciousness, in so far as it is tinged with feeling. Here we have all three elements of consciousness. We are aware of the existence of an object; since we are brought in relation to it, we recognise it as more or less harmonising with our desires, and we are conscious of pleasure or pain consequent on the greater or less extent to which knowledge and volition have suc-

ceeded in establishing a harmony. The state of mind may be a mere aggregate of three independent activities. In that case it will be useless for us. But it may turn out to be the concrete unity from which the three activities gained their apparent independence by illegitimate abstraction. If so, it may not impossibly be the synthesis for which we are searching.

It is clear that no emotion can be the ultimate form of Spirit, unless it regards all objects as individual spirits. For the dialectic shows us that, till we regard them thus, we do not regard them rightly. And the dialectic tells us also, that we do not regard them rightly till we know them to be in complete harmony with ourselves, and with one another. To regard all that we find round us as persons, to feel that their existence is completely rational, and that through it our own nature is realised, to experience unalloyed pleasure in our relations to them—this is a description to which only one emotion answers. We saw in the first part of this essay that the only value and interest of knowledge and volition, when pushed as far as they would go, lay in love. Here we go a step further. If anything in our present lives can resolve the contradictions inherent in knowledge and volition, and exhibit the truth which lies concealed in them, it must be love.

Let us examine how far this hypothesis agrees with the tests mentioned above. In the first place, the absolute form of Spirit must transcend the opposition between knowledge and volition as to the side of the relation which is to be considered valid in case of discrepancy. Neither side in the Absolute must attain any pre-eminence over the other, since such pre-eminence has only meaning with regard to the possibility of imperfection.

Neither side has the pre-eminence in love. It is not essential to it that the subject shall be brought into harmony with the object, as in knowledge, nor that the object shall be brought into harmony with the subject, as in volition. It is sufficient that the two terms should *be* in harmony. The subject refuses here to be forced into the abstract position of either slave or master. To conceive the relation *se* dependant on the conformity of the subject to the object

would ignore the fact that the subject has an ideal which possesses its rights, even if nothing corresponds to it in reality. To conceive the relation, on the other hand, as dependant on the conformity of the object to the subject, would be to forget that the emotion directs itself towards persons and not towards their relations with us. When, as in volition, the harmony results from the conformity of the object to the subject, any interest in the object as independent can only exist in so far as it realises the end of the subject, and is so subordinate. But here our interest in the object is not dependent on our interest in the subject. It is identical with it. We may as well be said to value ourselves because of the relation to the object, as the object because of its relation to ourselves.

This complete equilibrium between subject and object is the reason why love cannot be conceived as a duty on either side. It is not our duty to love others. (I am taking the unusual, and almost indecent, course of using the word love, in an abstract essay, to mean what it meant for Dante and Tennyson.) It is not the duty of others to be lovable by us. In knowledge and volition, where one side was to blame for any want of harmony, there was a meaning in saying that the harmony ought to be brought about. But here, where the sides have equal rights, where neither is bound to give way, no judgment can be passed. You can only say that the absence of the harmony proves the universe to be not yet perfect.

And, as this harmony subordinates neither side to the other, it is so far qualified to completely express the Absolute. It needs for its definition no reference to actual or possible defects. It is self-balanced, and can be self-subsistent.

Let us pass to the second test. Can we find here anything that will undo the havoc which the existence of the This has worked with knowledge and volition? The immediacy of the object we cannot hope to transcend. With it would vanish all mediation and all reality. But can we find here some point of view which will save us from the necessity of regarding the immediate as the contingent and the alien? I believe that we can.



We must remember, in the first place, that there is already present in knowledge and volition, though not as their object, an immediate which does not appear to us contingent and alien. This is the immediate reality of the self as subject. (When the self becomes an object of knowledge, it has the characteristics of other objects, and presents the same difficulties as they do, cp. above, p. 34). We are as certain of the uniqueness, reality, and immediacy of our own selves, as we are of the same qualities in outside objects. Yet we feel no opposition, no alienation, between the abstract self and its abstract qualities. If we look at ourselves as if they were something outside ourselves, we lose this advantage. But the self in its characteristic position—as the centre of our consciousness—has no discord between its immediate reality and its mediated qualities.

Why is this? It seems to be attributable to the fact that we see the subject in its concrete unity—the only way in which we can see anything as it really is. There is, of course, no need to bring the subject into unity with itself. And there is, therefore, no necessity to distort it, by analysing it into its two elements, each of which, if considered as an independent reality, would contradict the other and be self-contradictory. We see the two elements in the unity in which they really exist, in which they have no self-subsistence as against one another, and in which they show no opposition or contradiction.

But the object has to be brought into harmony with the subject. Knowledge and volition can only do this by producing or demonstrating the community of the What of the two sides. There is no community of the This, for the nature of the This is to be unique. Hence knowledge and volition, dealing with the What, and leaving the This as an untreatable residuum, have erected the two sides into two pseudo-independent realities. Hence the contradiction which haunts them. For the two sides, as abstracted from the concrete whole, imperiously postulate one another, and we can see that either by itself is unmeaning. Yet to bring them side by side is useless. A concrete unity cannot be restored by the mere juxtaposition of its elements, when by illegitimate abstraction they have acquired illegi-

timate independence. Such an attempt would be as useless<sup>s</sup> as the stitching together of Cassim after the robbers had once cut him up. And so it follows that the two sides, while demanding one another, equally reject one another, and appear at once essentially connected and essentially alien. Our difficulty with the object lies in our simultaneously holding that the two sides are reciprocally implicated, which is true, and that they may be considered as independent, which is a delusion inseparable from the method used to approach the object. But in the case of the subject this delusion does not appear, and the contradiction does not arise.

If we could regard the object as we regard the subject it would appear from what has been said that our difficulties would vanish. Now the dialectic assures us that every object, which can come into relation with us, is in reality a self-conscious and individual spirit—that is a subject. We may now go a step further, and say that, if we can regard the object as it regards itself, we shall have attained our end.

Now I submit that, since love is concerned with the object as a person, and not merely the results of the object on the subject, it does look at it as it would look at itself. The interest that I feel in my own life is not due to its having such and such qualities. I am interested in it because it is myself, whatever qualities it may have. I am not of course interested in myself apart from all qualities, which would be an unreal abstraction. But it is the self which gives the interest to the qualities, and not the reverse. With the object of knowledge or volition on the other hand, our interest is in the qualities which it may possess, and we are only concerned with the This—under which form the self of the object appears in knowledge and volition—because without it the qualities could not exist. But in the harmony which we are now considering, we do not, when it has been once reached, feel that the person is dear to us on account of his qualities, but rather that our attitude towards his qualities is determined by the fact that they belong to him.

In support of this we may notice, in the first place,

that love is not necessarily proportioned to the dignity or adequacy of the determining motive. This is otherwise in knowledge and volition. In volition, for example, the depth of our satisfaction ought to be proportioned to the completeness with which the environment harmonises with our ideals and to the adequacy with which our present ideals express our fundamental nature. If it is greater than these would justify it is unwarranted and illegitimate. But a trivial cause may determine the direction of very deep emotion. To be born in the same family, or to be brought up in the same house may determine it. It may be determined by physical beauty or by purely sensual desire. Or we may be, as we often are, unable to assign any determining cause at all. And yet the emotion produced may be indefinitely intense and elevated. This would seem to suggest that the emotion is directed to the person, not to his qualities, and that the determining qualities are not the ground of the harmony, but merely the road by which we proceed to that ground. In that case it is natural that they should bear no more necessary proportion to the harmony than the intrinsic value of the key of a safe does to the value of the gold inside it.

Another characteristic worth attention is the manner in which reference to the object becomes almost equivalent to reference to self. We have seen above that all volition implies a self-reference, that however disinterested the motive it can only form part of our life in so far as the self finds its good in it. Now here we seem to come across a state of things in which the value of truth and virtue for us seem to depend on the existence of another person, in the same way as they unquestionably depend for us on our own existence. And this not because the other person is specially interested in truth and virtue, but because all our interest in the universe is conceived as deriving its force from his existence. This is, I suspect, the real meaning of Lovelace, "I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honour more." The context indicates that his meaning was, not that honour was dearer to him than his lady, but that his love for her was the motive which gave strength to his sense of duty, independently of, or even opposed to, any desire or interest of hers.

And a third point which denotes that the interest is emphatically personal is found in our attitude when we discover that the relation has been based on some special congruity which has subsequently ceased to exist, or which was wrongly believed in, and never really existed at all. In knowledge and volition such a discovery would put an end to the relation altogether. To go on believing that a thing was rational or satisfactory, because it was so once, or because we once believed that it was so, would be recognised at once as an absurdity. If the cause of the harmony ceases, the harmony ceases too. But here the case is different. If once the relation has existed, any disharmony among the qualities need not, and, we feel, ought not, to injure the harmony between the persons. If a person proves irrational, or imperfect, this may make us miserable about him. It may make us blame him, or, more probably, make us blame God, or whatever substitute for him our religion may allow us. But it will not make us less interested in him, it will not make us less confident that our relation to him is the meaning of our existence, less compelled to view the universe *sub specie amati*. As well might any imperfection or sin in our nature render us less interested in our own condition, or convince us that it was unimportant to ourselves.

It often happens, of course, that such a strain is too hard for affection, and destroys it. But the distinction is that while such a result would be the only proper and natural one in knowledge and volition it is felt here as a condemnation. Knowledge and volition ought to yield. But love, we feel, if it had been strong enough, might have resisted, and ought to have resisted.

It may be urged with considerable force that all these phenomena are compatible with a theory which should attribute them, not to the adequacy with which the fundamental nature of Spirit is here displayed, but to errors and delusions of the human mind, which are well known to psychology. It may be said that the disproportion of the grounds and the intensity of affection merely shows the same want of judgment which, in volition, often makes us see our good in some trivial or unworthy aim. The



tendency of affection to regard its entire interest in the universe as centred and mirrored in a single person may be (and has been) ascribed to insanity. And its tendency to persist when the cause which first originated it has departed may be treated as a case of that irrational conservatism which leads us to esteem a building, a rite, or an office, when all ground for esteem has departed.

To refute this, if it can be refuted, would take far more psychological knowledge than I possess. I am not bound to attempt it. For I have not asserted that the existence of these characteristics proves that love is the adequate expression of the Absolute. I have only maintained that these characteristics must be found in any such adequate expression, and that they are not found in any part of our present experience, except in this. Here or nowhere, therefore, can we at present find any representation of the Absolute. It may be added that all that psychological analysis could possibly do would be to prove, not that love had not these characteristics, but that it had them through a mistake, and not through superior penetration. The most that could follow from this would be a conclusion that the absolute state of spirit would differ from love in being better founded. It would be equally true, that the two states, though founded, one on delusion and one on reality, would present fundamentally similar features. At the worst, then, the case would be that we had here an unwarranted anticipation of the Absolute, which would gain its warrant as the universe developed further. And the difference between such an anticipation and an incomplete manifestation (which because of its incompleteness must always be more or less unwarranted) is scarcely perceptible.

It would seem then, that we have here reached a standpoint from which we are able to regard the object as it regards itself. We are able to regard the history and content of the object as a manifestation of its individuality, instead of being obliged to regard the individuality as a dead residuum in which the content inheres. We are able to see the object from within outwards, instead from without inwards. And so its claims to independence and substantiality become no more alien or inharmonious to us than our own. D

This recognition of the independence of the object is absolute. In knowledge and volition that independence was recognised to some extent. In volition, in particular, and more especially in those higher stages in which volition becomes moral, we saw that our own satisfaction depends on realising the independence and the rights of others, and treating them, not as means, but as ends. But the reasons why this was necessary were always relative to our own self-development. Even with virtue, the ultimate ground of each man's choice of it must always be that he prefers it to vice. And hence this recognition as ends was itself a subordination as means, and the absolute assertion of itself as end, which the object itself made, continued to be something alien and inharmonious.

The position here is different. The subject is no longer in the same position of one-sided supremacy. In knowledge and volition it exists as a centre of which the world of objects is the circumference. This relation continues, for without it our self-consciousness and our existence would disappear. But conjoined with it we have now the recognition of the fact that we ourselves form part of the circumference of other systems of which other individuals are the centre. We know, of course, all through life, that this must be so. But here for the first time we come consciously and essentially into this relation. We are not only part of some one else's world in his eyes, but in our own. And we feel that this dependence on another is as directly and truly self-realization as is the dependence of others on us. All through life self-surrender is the condition of self-attainment. Here, for the first time, they become identical. The result doubtless seems paradoxical. But any change which made it simpler would render it, I think, less correspondent to facts. And if, as I have endeavoured to show, knowledge and volition carry in them defects which prevent our regarding them as ultimate, we need not be alarmed for our formula of the Absolute, should it appear paradoxical to them. It would be in greater danger if they could fully acquiesce in it.

With such a formula our difficulties cease. Here we have perfect unity between subject and object, since it is

in the whole object, and not merely in one element of it, that we find satisfaction. And, for the same reason, the object attains its rights in the way of complete differentiation, since we are able, now that we are in unity with the whole of it, to recognise it as a true individual. Again, even unmeaning doubts of the completeness and security of the harmony between subject and object must now vanish, since not even an abstraction is left over as alien, on which scepticism could fix as a possible centre of discord.

It may seem unreasonable to represent the ultimate perfection of Spirit as existing in love, and in love only. For such a uniformity would be impossible in the present stage of our development. Emotion has now only justification and meaning in so far as it springs from, is surrounded by, and results in, acts of knowledge and volition, which remain such and never pass into a higher stage. This, however, is due to the imperfection, and not to the nature of the case. At present there is much of reality in which we are unable to perceive its spiritual nature. Whenever we do recognise a self-conscious individual we can only come into relation with him in so far as that other reality, still conceived as matter, which we call our bodies, can be made organic to our purposes. And finally, even when we have recognised reality as Spirit, the imperfection of our present knowledge leaves a large number of its qualities apparently contingent and irrational. Thus every case in which we have established a personal relation must be surrounded by large numbers of others in which we have not done so. And as all reality is interconnected, the establishment and maintenance of this relation must be connected with, and dependent on the imperfect relations into which we come with the surrounding reality. And, again, the same interconnection brings it about that the harmony with any one object can never be perfect, till the harmony with all other objects is so. Thus our relations with any one object could never be completely absorbed in love—leaving no knowledge and volition untranscended—until the same result was universally attained.

But there is no reason that it should not be attained completely, if attained universally. It is entitled to stand



by itself, for it is, as we have seen, self-contained. It does not require a reference to some correlative and opposed activity to make its own nature intelligible, and it does not require any recognition of the possibility of discord. It is the simple and absolute expression of harmony, and, when once the harmony of the whole universe has become explicit, it is capable of expressing the meaning of the whole universe.

Before this ideal could be attained, it is clear that sense-presentation, as a method of obtaining our knowledge of the object, would have to cease. For the only data which are given to us through sense-presentation, are purely immediate. To construct a faithful picture of the object, which contains the elements both of immediacy and mediation, it is necessary to combine these data by means of categories found in our own minds. And we have seen (cp. p. 45) that the attempt to reconstruct the object from the elements of which it is composed cannot restore its concrete unity, but, to some extent, leaves the elements merely side by side, and therefore contradictory. In a complete harmony the object would have to be seen at once in its full reality, as in the so-called "intellectual intuition" by which according to some of the older metaphysicians, God perceives the world.

Such an intuition would be incompatible with knowledge and volition. For the action of these forms consists in the mediation of the immediate. It is only by their method of performing this process that they are distinguished from one another. If the object were presented to us as it really is, no process would be necessary to bring about harmony.

Whether such a relation with external objects would be compatible with emotion we cannot decide. Clearly we can never experience it, so long as our souls only act through our bodies, and to enquire what will happen when they do not, would exceed even the license I have allowed myself in this essay. I will only say that I do not see any imperative reason why they should not be compatible. The impossibility to receive any direct information except about the immediate element of the object



rests, so far as we can see, on nothing but the impossibility of receiving any other information through our physical senses. Now physical senses may be necessary means of information while much of the reality, of which we desire to be informed, still takes the shape of matter, and the rest is only known to us in so far as it acts through material bodies. But it seems quite possible that the necessity, which spirits are at present under, of communicating with one another through matter, only exists because the matter happens to be in the way. In that case, when the whole universe is viewed as spirit, so that nothing relatively alien could come between one individual and another, the connection between spirits might very possibly be direct. And, with no imperfect medium to hinder or distort it, it does not seem incredible that the whole nature of the object, and not merely immediate data, should be presented at once.

It may, again, be remarked of the adequate realisation of the Absolute, that it must be timeless. For if it were conceived as realised during a finite period of time, the existence of any cause sufficient to determine it to cease at the end of the period would be incompatible with complete harmony. On the other hand, to imagine it as realised through unending time would be to take the indefinite extensibility, which is all that we can truly predicate of time, as if it were equivalent with actual endless extent. And Hegel has taught us that the infinite of endless repetition cannot be taken as an ultimate term in any valid explanation.

The knowledge and volition should ever become timeless would appear impossible. For their work is to deal with reality which is first presented to them in the form of an unconnected manifold. To grasp a mere plurality like this apparently requires a succession of acts of apprehension, and succession, of course, involves time. I am very far from venturing to assert that emotion could become timeless. Indeed, we can scarcely at present attach the faintest definite meaning to the words. But I think that the reasons, which make us definitely assert the impossibility of such a change in the previous case, do not apply here.

For if, in emotion, we are able to come into contact with the object as it really is, we shall find no disconnected manifold. The object is not, of course, a mere blank unity. It is a unity which manifests itself in multiplicity. But, the multiplicity only exists in so far as it is contained in the unity. And, since the object has thus a real unity of its own, it might perhaps be possible to apprehend the whole of it at once, and not to require that successive apprehension, which the synthesis of a manifold, originally given as unconnected, would always require.

It is true, of course, that we cannot conceive the Absolute as connection with a single other person, but rather, directly or indirectly, with all others. But we must remember again, that the very fact that all reality must be conceived as in perfect unity, forces us to consider individuals not as a mere numerical or mechanical aggregate, but as forming a single whole, only differing from an organism because its parts are far more intimately connected than those of any organism can be. The various individuals therefore must be conceived as forming a differentiated and multiplex whole, but by no means as an unconnected manifold. It might therefore be practicable to dispense with successive acts of apprehension in contemplating the complete whole of the universe, as much as in contemplating the relative whole of a single individual. And in that case, we can see no positive reason why the highest form of emotion should not be free from succession, and from time.

I should be inclined to say, personally, that even at present, the idea of timeless emotion is one degree less unintelligible than that of timeless knowledge and volition—that the most intense emotion has some power of making time seem, if not unreal, at any rate excessively unimportant, which does not belong to any other form of mental activity. But this is a matter of introspection which every person must decide for himself.

How such great and fundamental changes can be made—how knowledge and volition are to pass into love, and a life in time into timelessness—may well seem doubtful. Even if we grant that it must be so, the manner in which the transition can possibly be effected would

present many difficulties. But all such transitions, we may reflect, must necessarily appear strained and artificial, till they have taken place. The transition is from two relatively abstract ideas to a more comprehensive one, which synthesises them. Till the synthesis has taken place, the abstractions have not yet lost the false appearance of substantiality and independence which they acquired by their abstraction from the whole. Till the synthesis has taken place, therefore, the process by which the two sides lose their independence and distinction must appear something, which, although inevitable, is also inexplicable. It is not till the change has been made that we are able to fully realise that all the meaning of the lower lay in the higher, and that what has been lost was nothing but delusion. So, in this case, we must remember that we are not building up love *de novo* out of knowledge and volition, but merely clearing away the mistakes which presented the former to us in the form of the latter. We are not constructing, but discovering. The only reality, if our theory is correct, is in the timeless and absolute harmony. We have not to construct it from the imperfect harmonies now around us, but only to show that these are misrepresentations of it.

I have only left myself room for a few brief words on the more practical aspects of the question. And, in the first place, it will be necessary to meet an objection which will naturally occur to a theory which places the perfection of Spirit in love only. It may be said that the extent and intensity in which this element enters into man's life is not a test of his perfection. Some people who have comparatively little of it we consider as far higher than others who have much. And, which is perhaps a more crucial instance, we find cases in which we regard as a distinct advance a change in a man's life which diminishes his devotion to individuals in comparison with his ardour for abstract truth or abstract good.

The existence of such cases cannot be denied, but need not, I think, be considered incompatible with what has been said. Any harmony which we can attain at present must be very imperfect, and postulates its own

completion, at once because of its partial success and of its partial failure. Now the principle of a dialectic is that Spirit cannot advance in a straight line, but is compelled so to speak, to tack from side to side, emphasising first one aspect of the truth, and then its complementary and contradictory aspect, and then finding the harmony between them. In so far, then, as the harmony is at any time imperfect, because it has not fully grasped the opposites to be reconciled, it can only advance by first grasping them, and then reconciling them. The difference must be first recognised, and then conquered, and between the first stage and the second the harmony will be impaired. The concrete whole may be cut up into the abstract generality of religion and the abstract particularity of passion ; it may be cut up into the abstract submission of the search for truth and the abstract assertion of the search for good ; it may be cut up into abstract intensity deficient in breadth and abstract extension deficient in depth. When any of these divisions happen the harmony will disappear, and yet the change will be an advance, since we shall have entered on the only path by which the harmony can be perfected. In that harmony alone we live. But here, as everywhere in this imperfect world, the old paradox holds good. He who seeks to save his life shall lose it. He who loses his life, for his life's sake, shall find it. (I have ventured to recast the historical form of this maxim.)

The result of the whole investigation would seem to come to this,—that it is by love only that we can fully enter into that harmony with others which alone constitutes our own reality and the reality of the universe. We conceive the universe as a spiritual whole, made up of individuals, who have no existence except as manifestations of the whole, as the whole, on the other hand, has no existence except as manifested in them. The individuals, again, find their meaning and reality only in their connection with one another. And this connection is not to be conceived as a mechanical or arbitrary collection of particulars, but as exhibiting some plan or principle, in which the self-differentiation of the universal into the particular,



has become so perfect, that from the idea of the whole we could determine any part, and from any part we could determine all the others. The relation in which each individual, as subject, finds himself to the others as objects, is one in which subject and object are in perfect equilibrium and perfect harmony. And in so far as love fulfils its own ideal, it has fulfilled this ideal also. Knowledge and volition, on the other hand, only represented the true connection adequately in so far as they are approximations to and abstractions from love; in so far as they differ from it and claim independence, they fail either to realise the true connection of reality or to fulfil their own ideal. Our conclusion then is extravagant enough. Love is not only the highest thing in the universe, but the only thing. Nothing else has true reality, everything which has partial reality has it only as an imperfect form of the one perfection.

This love cannot be what is generally called love of God. To discuss this question fully would take us into all the reasons which could be urged—I believe successfully—in favour of the proposition that Idealism finds the ultimate reality of the universe in a unity of persons and not a personal unity. Nor can I stop to enquire whether the word love can be applied to the relations of the finite with the infinite, with any real meaning—whether such an emotion could have any closer resemblance to what is ordinarily known as love, than the dog-star, to use Spinoza's illustration, has to a dog.

But we may briefly notice that whether God is conceived as immanent in the universe, or as external to it, an emotion directed towards Him could not be the universal activity for which we have been looking. In the second of these two cases, it would follow that a God, on whom a universe was dependent, would be necessarily also dependent on the universe (*cp.* Hegel's *Encyclopædia*, Section 95). Such a limited being could scarcely be regarded as adequate to be the sole object of the only real activity of spirit. Moreover on this hypothesis the universe has an existence separate from, though dependent on, the existence of God. And consequently the other parts of the universe must be held

to be in connection with ourselves somehow—a condition which could not be realised in an emotion connecting each of us individually with God.

If, on the other hand, we regard God as immanent in the universe, and as manifesting himself by its means, the difficulty takes another form. God is then the principle of unity in the universe. But the unity, we have seen, is as unreal without the differentiation, as the differentiation is without the unity. A mere God therefore, not incarnate in man, is as unmeaning an abstraction and contradiction as a mere man who should not be an incarnation of God. And an emotion directed to what is unreal and contradictory cannot be an adequate expression of the reality of all things. Nor can we say that it is God that we love in man. It is not more the merely divine than the merely material. The incarnation is not here a divine condescension, as in various religious systems. The abstractly divine is as much below the concrete individual as is the abstractly material, and it is the concrete individual which alone can give us what we seek for.

Again, though differentiation has no right as against the concrete whole, it is independent as against a mere unity. And therefore, if we could come into relation with the unity as such, it would not connect us with the differentiated parts of the universe, and could not therefore be a relation adequately expressing all reality.

We can, if we choose, say that our love is *in* God, meaning thereby that it cannot, at its highest, be conceived as merely subjective and capricious, but that it expresses the order of the universe, and is conscious that it does so. It is more than religion, but it must include religion. The invocation which conquered the spirits of the Beryl was two-sided: "Love, for thy sake. In thy name, O God." But this is not love of God. The relation is between persons, and God is conceived only as, so to speak, their common quality.

If we cannot, properly speaking, love God, it is still more impossible to love mankind. For mankind is an abstraction too, and a far more superficial abstraction. If God was only an abstraction of the element of unity, at least he

was an abstraction of the highest and most perfect unity, able to fuse into a whole the highest and most perfect differentiation. But mankind represents a far less vital unity. It is a common quality of individuals, but not, conceived merely as mankind, a living unity between them. The whole nature of the individual lies in his being a manifestation of God. But the unity of mankind is not a principle from which the differences of its individuals can be deduced. The human race, viewed as such, is only an aggregate, not even an organism. You might as well try to love an indefinitely extended Post Office Directory. And the same will hold true of all subordinate aggregates—nations, churches, and families.

We must come back to the meaning of the word before it got into the hands of the thinkers for whom the highest is synonymous with the most abstract. It must mean for us, as it means for the world, the love that one person feels for one other person. At the same time we must guard against confounding it with the special forms which it assumes at present. At present it makes instruments of sexual desire, of the connection of marriage, or of the connection of blood. But in so far as these depend on any determining cause outside love itself, they cannot be the ultimate forms under which it manifests itself. Love for which any cause can be assigned carries the marks of its own incompleteness upon it. For all relations, all reality, must, I have tried to show, have been changed and transformed into love. Thus there will be nothing left outside to determine it. Love is itself the relation which binds individuals together. Each relation it establishes is part of the ultimate nature of the unity of the whole. It does not require or admit of justification or determination by anything else. It is itself the justification and determination of all things. The nearest approach to it we can know now is the love for which no cause can be given, and which is not determined by any outer relationship, of which we can only say that two people belong to one another—the love of the *Vita Nuova* and of *In Memoriam*.

No doubt an emotion which should be sufficient, both in extent and intensity, to grasp the entire universe, must



be different in degree from anything of which we can now have experience. Yet this need not make us feel any essential difference between the two, if the distinction is only one of growth, and not of generic change. The attempt to imagine any communion so far reaching—extending, as we must hold it to do, to all reality in the universe—is no doubt depressing, almost painful. But this arises, I think, from the inability, under which we at present lie, to picture the ideal except under the disguise of a “false infinite” of endless succession. However much we may *know* that the kingdom of heaven is spiritual and timeless, we cannot help *imagining* it as in time, and can scarcely avoid imagining it as in space. In this aspect the magnitude of the field to be included naturally appears as something alien and inimical to our power of including it. We are forced too, since our imagination is limited by the stage of development in which we at present are, to give undue importance to the aspect of number, as applied to the individuals in the Absolute. If we look at it from this standpoint the briefest contemplation is bewildering and crushing. But number is a very inadequate category. Even in every day life we may see how number falls into the shade as our knowledge of the subject matter increases. Of two points on an unlimited field we can say nothing but that they are two in number. But if we were considering the relation of Hegel's philosophy to Kant's or of Dante to Beatrice, the advance which we should make by counting them would be imperceptible. When everything is seen under the highest category, the Absolute Idea, this process would have been complete. All lower categories would have been transcended, and all separate significance of number would have vanished. And the dead weight, produced by the conception of an infinite number of things to be brought into unity, would vanish with it.

We must remember too, once more, that the Absolute is not an aggregate but a system. The multiplicity of the individuals is not, therefore, a hindrance in the way of establishing a harmony with any one of them, as might be the case if each of them was an independent rival of all



the rest. It is rather to be considered as an assistance, since our relations with each will, through their mutual connections, be strengthened by our relations with all the others. "The complex reverberation of sympathy," to use a characteristic phrase of Dr Sidgwick's in a somewhat different context, is always a fact of vital importance. And when the friction, which is necessarily incident to a world of matter and of undeveloped spirit, was no longer a hindrance to its action, the indefinite extension of individual sympathy, although no doubt incomprehensible, need scarcely be considered incredible.

It would be useless to attempt to deny that the conclusions I have endeavoured to support are hopelessly mystical. In admitting this I shall be thought by many people to have pronounced their condemnation. But mysticism is not so easily to be got rid of. The attempt to join in a vital unity things which the consciousness of every day life regards as separate—and this is mysticism—is inherent in philosophy, which can neither disregard the difference, nor be contented without the unity. And when we consider that all things which we are accustomed to think of as different, are joined in a unity by the very fact that we think of them, and that a difference without unity, or a unity without a difference, are unmeaning terms, we may perhaps suspect that, if mysticism is a reproach, it is not so much philosophy which deserves the blame, as the reality which philosophy endeavours to represent.

A mysticism which ignored the claims of the understanding would indeed be doomed. "None ever went about to break logic, but in the end logic broke him." But this cannot be said of a mysticism which starts from the standpoint of ordinary life, and only departs from it in so far as that standpoint shows itself not to be ultimate, but to postulate something beyond itself. To transcend the lower is not to defy it. It is only such a result which will complete the work of Idealism, if it is to be completed. And it is only in this sense that I have ventured to indicate the possibility of finding, above all knowledge and

volition, one all-embracing unity, which is only not true, only not good, because all truth and all goodness are but distorted shadows of its absolute perfection,—“das Unbegreifliche, weil es der Begriff Selbst ist.”









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